

Dear Federal Communications Commission:

As a concerned citizen, taxpayer, voter and employee of a major telecommunication company it deeply stresses me to think that other telecommunication companies do not have to play by the same rules. I have recently learned that the Federal Communications Commission will be making a decision regarding AT&T's avoidance of more than half a billion dollars in obligations owed for its prepaid calling cards. My family lives in rural North Carolina and this reckless maneuver threatens to destabilize rural telecommunications, jeopardize Internet access in our schools and libraries and put at risk the nation's commitment to affordable, reliable access to a dial tone for all of its citizens. As a responsible citizen, I am expected to pay all of my bills on time and in full. Please hold AT&T to this same standard and reject the company's self-serving scam.

Even if I am forced to listen to an advertisement before placing my calling card call, I know that I am still placing a phone call. As such, AT&T has an obligation to contribute to universal service. By avoiding more than \$160 million in universal service obligations, AT&T has put affordable access to telephone service at risk for thousands of low-income and rural families. I find this reprehensible, and I hope that you put a stop to it.

Equally worrisome is AT&T's unilateral decision not to pay for its callings cards' use of local telecommunications networks. The tab? \$340 million and counting. That's a significant sum that could destabilize local telecommunications, particularly in rural areas, and hinder investment in advanced services, like high-speed Internet.

Perhaps most disgraceful is AT&T's excuse: If it has to pay its bills, then it has to raise the price of its calling cards. Don't buy into this veiled threat. In today's marketplace, consumers have plenty of choices from companies that manage to pay their bills and offer affordable calling options. Also, our military forces all use AT&T calling cards that their friends and family buy and send to them. Is this the way we reward AT&T is by letting them get away with not paying their share.

I can't imagine what would happen to me if I had more than \$500 million in unpaid bills! Please make sure AT&T is not above the law. I urge the Commission to reaffirm that AT&T's prepaid calling card service is what it is: a telecommunications service. I ask you to require AT&T to pay what it owes to universal service and for use of local telecommunications networks-more than half a billion dollars, plus applicable penalties. And, I encourage you to act swiftly, so that other companies don't follow AT&T's bad example. Please act now!

Sincerely,

Catherine Urich
1004 Downing Way Ct
Raleigh, NC 27614-8184